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Contact: Connie Barclay
(301) 713-2370
Dawn Jennings
(410) 576-3860

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**NOAA PROVIDES \$100,000 FOR CHESAPEAKE BAY HABITAT RESTORATION TO THE
NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE**

Morgan State Receives Funds to Expand Patapsco Monitoring Project

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will award the National Aquarium in Baltimore \$100,000 3 p.m. Nov. 9 during a presentation ceremony with NOAA Acting Administrator Scott Gudes at the National Aquarium. The funds will be used to support grass-roots efforts to restore critical fisheries habitat throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

"The Bay is a treasure-trove of natural and cultural resources. Keeping it healthy enough to support a wide variety of marine life is a major undertaking," said Gudes. "By working with the aquarium and other partners, we are making progress by encouraging local communities to participate in restoration projects. They, in turn, develop a sense of stewardship for the Chesapeake that will protect its many natural resources into the future."

The award will be used to create and restore nearly 20 acres of wetlands, improve shoreline stabilization, create habitat and engage the public in the process which will have great application for many sites around the bay.

"I am incredibly pleased that the National Marine Fisheries Service is able to strengthen this restoration partnership between the Aquarium and NOAA to such an extent," said NOAA fisheries Assistant Administrator Bill Hogarth. "I'm proud of the many hours of technical support our fisheries biologists have dedicated to Chesapeake Bay restoration and thrilled that we've been able to provide substantial financial resources as well."

A portion of the money will be used to expand a minority student internship program between the National Aquarium and Morgan State University. Working with the aquarium and NOAA, Morgan State faculty and students monitor water quality in the Patapsco River and collect data on salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen and nutrients. These parameters are then measured and analyzed by the students using the most current technology, following strict protocols currently used by NOAA scientists.

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"Having NOAA as a partner has been a perfect example of public-private partnerships that work," said Glenn Page, director of conservation at the National Aquarium in Baltimore. Together we're providing an opportunity for people of greater Baltimore to participate in hands-on restoration activities which further connects them to the Chesapeake Bay. This grant award to continue our restoration work and enhance our partnership with Morgan State University is a perfect way to begin the academic year.

"It is critical that we provide our students with challenging real-world opportunities and hands-on experience," said Livingston Marshall, associate professor and faculty sponsor at Morgan State. Morgan State University is serving as a national model to create programs to engage students from under-served populations in exciting habitat restoration and monitoring projects."

NOAA and the aquarium currently partner on a variety of projects around Chesapeake Bay. They include the restoration of a 10-acre salt marsh site at Ft. McHenry National Monument in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, a wetlands creation project at Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and the shoreline stabilization and an 11-acre wetland restoration project on Barren Island.

NOAA fisheries provides the funds through its Community-Based Restoration Program, which works with community organizations to support effective habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas since 1996.

The NOAA Restoration Center, housed within NOAA fisheries, is home to the Community-Based Restoration Program. Partnerships with federal agencies, states, local governments, non-governmental and non-profit organizations, businesses, industry and schools have helped hundreds of local efforts restore coastal habitat. More information on the NOAA Restoration Center can be viewed at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. To learn more about NOAA fisheries, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>